

work on important legislation to finally help America end its dependence on foreign oil and pursue newer, cleaner forms of energy.

I'm excited that the Energy and Water appropriations bill that we will pass this week will take the long overdue step of setting a new course for our energy future by making significant investments in renewables and efficiency.

For too many years, working families have felt the sting of high gas prices at the gas pump and rising home energy costs. Our economy has been made vulnerable to the whims of OPEC, and our reliance on fossil fuels has polluted our air and exacerbated climate change.

All the while, State and local governments have been forced to try to fill the leadership vacuum left by the Congress and this President.

No more. The new Congress is prepared to meet our Nation's energy challenges head-on, and to do so, this bill provides almost \$2 billion for renewables and efficiency, significantly more than the President requested.

I am concerned that it continues to provide unwarranted taxpayer subsidies for nuclear power that hide the true consumer costs of this power source, but I support this bill, and I urge my colleagues to ratify it.

AMERICANS ARE MORE THAN QUALIFIED TO BREAK THEIR ADDICTION TO OIL

(Mrs. BLACKBURN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I read in the Charlotte Observer about a gentleman who decided to retrofit his 1981 diesel Mercedes with vegetable oil and got a knock on his door by the tax man. His crime was choosing to take a stand against the rising cost of gasoline, OPEC, and other international energy cartels by converting his car into clean-running alternative energy. His punishment was a \$1,000 fine by the North Carolina State Government and \$1,000 notice from the Feds. So much for innovation and alternative fuel research.

The predicament was chronicled in the Charlotte Observer on June 15, and what we're finding out is he's not alone. Many innovators around the country are creating unique ways to exercise energy independence. In so doing, they're demonstrating to the Federal Government that the American people are more than qualified to break their addiction to foreign oil. Good old American ingenuity always comes through.

As we take up consideration on the Energy Approps Act for 2008, it's instructive to consider what they know. If you want to get more innovation, incentivize it. If you want less of it, tax it.

TAKING CARE OF OUR VETERANS

(Mr. CARNAHAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CARNAHAN. Mr. Speaker, I stand to honor our Nation's veterans and one special veteran. Today, we mourn the passing of Jeff Smart, a Vietnam veteran, constituent and friend. Not only was Jeff a tireless advocate for veterans rights, he was a valuable member of my Veterans Advisory Committee in Missouri.

I know that Jeff would be proud to know that last week the House came together in a bipartisan way to pass the 2008 Military Construction and Veterans Affairs appropriations bill that contained a historic increase in the VA budget. This bill included the largest single funding increase in the 77-year history of the Veterans Administration.

This funding increase ensures that our veterans are given the support, benefits and resources they need and deserve. I applaud this Congress's commitment to countless veterans like Jeff Smart who will always inspire us in the years to come.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, JERRY BAKER, AMERICA'S MASTER GARDENER

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to salute Jerry Baker, America's master gardener, as he celebrates his birthday. As a former owner of a nursery business, I've come to appreciate the wit and wisdom that Jerry has given to gardeners across the country for more than three decades.

Jerry has been offering tips for almost as long as I can remember. His folksy and down-to-earth advice has been helping everyone from city dwellers trying to master a finicky herb garden in a window box to longtime gardeners across rural America who produce those ubiquitous wheelbarrows full of zucchini.

Thanks to Jerry, our gardens have been producing more with less. Today, with dozens of books full of garden advice in print and a weekly nationwide radio show where he solves the gardening problems of people across the country, Jerry is well-established as America's go-to guy on all things gardening.

As he marks one more year on his calendar, I rise to wish him many more years of garden mastering. Happy birthday, Jerry.

PRESIDENT BLOCKING THE DEMOCRATIC NEW DIRECTION AGENDA

(Mr. PERLMUTTER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, the new Democratic-led House has been lis-

tening to the American people and working to take our Nation in a new direction. We've passed a wide range of measures to strengthen our military, grow our economy and support working families, many with bipartisan support.

For example, so far this year, we've passed legislation implementing the 9/11 Commission recommendations, approved a budget that achieves a balance in 5 years, passed sweeping congressional ethics reform, repealed big oil subsidies, invested funds in renewable energy and increased the minimum wage.

But the President continues his stubborn opposition to this new direction that we are providing on Iraq and on key domestic measures. He does not support or has threatened to veto about two-thirds of the important work we've already provided.

Mr. Speaker, our priorities are America's priorities. It's time the President stops obstructing our agenda and begins working with us to improve the lives of all Americans.

PROTECTING OUR KIDS FROM CONTAMINATED PRODUCTS

(Mr. KIRK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KIRK. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Consumer Product Safety Commission and toy company RC2 announced a recall of 1.5 million Thomas & Friends railway toys because they might contain dangerous amounts of lead.

Lead poisoning causes vomiting and diarrhea, convulsions, anemia, a loss of appetite, abdominal pain, irritability, fatigue and coma. It can even be fatal.

The toys were made in China and were retailed throughout the United States. First, it was pet food, then toothpaste, now Thomas the Tank Engine. Just about every family with kids in my district has a Thomas the Tank Engine.

We need to send a clear notice to importers that goods that threaten the safety of kids should be left on America's docks.

That's why I'm introducing legislation this week that prohibits the importation of any product from an importer of processed food or retail goods that the Secretary of Health and Human Services has determined contains unsafe levels of contaminants.

Mr. Speaker, we need to do this to defend America's families, especially its children.

DIFFERENT PRIORITIES ON FEDERAL SPENDING

(Mr. ALTMIRE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. ALTMIRE. Mr. Speaker, President Bush said this week that there are important differences between Republicans and Democrats when it comes to

spending, and he's right, because for 6 years, President Bush joined with Republicans that led this Congress on the most fiscally irresponsible budget policies in the history of the Nation. They turned the record surpluses of the 1990s into the record deficits we face today, and while they ran up those record deficits, inconceivably they cut medical research. They cut Head Start, they cut clean water programs, and they cut health care for our Nation's veterans.

Mr. Speaker, the Democratic budget balances the budget within 5 years, and our appropriations bills comply with pay-as-you-go scoring. We passed Homeland Security and Military Construction and Veterans appropriations bills last week, and this week we'll pass an Energy and Water bill that includes renewable fuel and reduces our dependence on foreign oil.

So you see, Mr. Speaker, the President's right; we do have different priorities on Federal spending.

IN APPRECIATION OF THE NRA

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, nearly 2 months after the horrifying events at Virginia Tech took the lives of 32 innocent people, I am grateful the House last week acted to improve State reporting to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System. Sadly, had this legislation been in place sooner, that tragic day at Virginia Tech might never have occurred.

I'm especially pleased that the National Rifle Association, of which I'm a proud member, was active in supporting this effort. I'm also thankful John Goodwin, previously with former Congressman Rob Simmons, has recently joined their able team. The NRA plays a vital role in promoting second amendment rights, and I appreciate their work.

Our thoughts and prayers remain with the families affected by the Virginia Tech shootings. I urge the Senate to quickly consider H.R. 2640 to ensure guns are available to law-abiding citizens and kept from the hands of criminals.

In conclusion, God bless our troops and we will never forget September 11. Our sympathy to the people of Charleston due to the tragic deaths of courageous firemen.

DEMOCRATS MAKE GLOBAL WARMING A PRIORITY THIS WEEK AS PART OF ENERGY AND WATER BILL

(Mr. WILSON of Ohio asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. WILSON of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, this week the new Democratic House addresses two of our Nation's most im-

portant issues, global warming and energy independence.

This new Democratic Congress recognizes that we must take wide-ranging action to lessen our dependence on foreign oil and to cut our greenhouse gas emissions to protect our planet, to reduce energy prices, and to boost our economy while strengthening our national security.

This week we will bring an Energy and Water funding bill to the floor that makes a significant investment in energy efficiency and renewable energy programs.

We invest \$51 million more than the President has asked for in our solar energy and more affordable, \$70 million more for the development of biofuels, and \$59 million more to develop technologies to improve our fuel efficiency.

Mr. Speaker, this new Democratic Congress is serious about addressing the issues that have been ignored for far too long. I would hope our energy bill would receive strong bipartisan support this week.

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FEDERAL FUNDING FOR PLANNED PARENTHOOD

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, President Bush has been very clear. If Congress sends him appropriations bills that weaken current pro-life provisions, he will veto the bills. But don't be surprised if the new Democratic majority is trying to do so anyway. When they do, I am sure they will have countless reasons for why they should weaken protections for the unborn.

But as this debate goes forward, it's important to keep in mind how much Uncle Sam already gives to abortion providers. Planned Parenthood reported record profits in 2005-2006 fiscal year. Guess who helped them achieve these profits? That's right, the American taxpayer.

In 2005-2006, Planned Parenthood received over \$305 million in taxpayer funding, the most ever in a year. They also performed nearly 265,000 abortions, another record. Keep this in mind as we hear the other side's arguments for giving even more money to abortion providers. The fact is, these groups are milking the American taxpayers.

President Bush is right to stand up for current pro-life provisions, and House Republicans will stand with him on the issue.

GENERAL PETRAEUS ADMITS THAT CONDITIONS WILL NOT IMPROVE IN IRAQ BY SEPTEMBER

(Mr. SIREs asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SIREs. Mr. Speaker, through a congressional debate on the Iraq sup-

plemental funding bill, Senate and House Republican leaders said that significant improvements will be needed to be seen by September in Iraq, otherwise a serious course correction might be needed.

We'll see if Republican leaders will continue to back those words and will finally join us in moving the Iraq war in a new direction, or will they move the deadline to a later date like they have done in the past. It will be interesting to see if they stand by their statements in light of General David Petraeus' acknowledgment over the weekend that conditions in Iraq were not improved by September. The general also indicated that stabilizing Iraq will take as long as 10 years.

Mr. Speaker, Democrats remain committed to forging a new direction in Iraq. In the coming months, Democrats will continue to hold President Bush accountable to fight to ensure that the Iraqi people take control of the country. A 10-year commitment is simply unacceptable to us. Now we will see if the Republicans will stand by their past statements and join us in the efforts in September.

CHILD CRUSADERS

(Mr. POE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, in the days of the recent past, when a child was sexually assaulted, the criminal justice system continued to victimize the child, because the victim was bounced all over town relating the story to numerous strangers.

Sometimes a child, when interviewed at the police station, actually came in direct contact with the offender. Also, the child could wait for hours in the same county emergency rooms as other victims of stabbings, car wrecks and overdoses.

But times have changed. There are over 680 child advocacy centers in the United States, including one in Houston, where victims go when assaulted. At the center are trained police, therapists, doctors and lawyers that are experts in dealing with children. Here the child is helped before the trial, during the trial, and, yes, after trial.

The National Children's Alliance, led by Nancy Chandler, is the umbrella organization that helps these 600-plus centers throughout the Nation. All these child crusaders are in Washington this week working to make our land safer for kids.

America is grateful to these members of the victims' posse that help protect our greatest resource, children. After all, it shouldn't hurt to be a kid in the United States.

And that's just the way it is.

MAKE GLOBAL WARMING A PRIORITY THIS WEEK AS PART OF ENERGY AND WATER BILL

(Ms. SHEA-PORTER asked and was given permission to address the House